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From: Rodriguez, Elias
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Subject: Sirenusa Response (St John VI Incident) News Clips

Opinion: DPNR is to blame for failing to regulate pesticides

13 Apr 2015

The Virgin Islands Daily News

By Joe Williamson — Joe Williamson, Ph. D., is an entomologist at the University of the Virgin Islands and director of the V. I. Pesticide Safety Education Program

DPNR is to blame for failing to regulate pesticides – despite receiving federal funds DPNR has received \$77,000 over the last three years from the federal EPA, which DPNR is required to forward to UVI's Pesticide Safety Education Program to provide the courses. DPNR has received all of those funds but forwarded \$0 — nothing — to the Pesticide Safety Education Program in the St. Thomas-St. John district.

Pesticide applicators in the USVI are under extra pressure since the methyl bromide incident on St. John, both from both their regulator, the V.I. Department of Planning and Natural Resources and from their clients.

There is greater expectation for each applicator to have adequate training and certification.

However, pesticide certification training is no longer being offered in the St. Thomas/St. John district.

Re-certification is no longer being offered anywhere in the USVI. The last course offered in St. Thomas was last May.

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DPNR has received all of those funds but forwarded \$0 — nothing — to the Pesticide Safety Education Program in the St. Thomas-St. John district.

Further, DPNR is under probation by EPA for failure to forward those and other required funds. I know this because I direct the Pesticide Safety Education Program in the USVI. For two years,

UVI covered my travel expenses to St. Thomas to provide the courses, but the university stopped that until DPNR reimbursed.

Courses still are being offered on St. Croix, where I live and don't require travel expenses.

This failure spans three years and two administrations. I place the blame solely on the sitting and previous DPNR commissioners and the governors for not correcting the problem.

National Pest Management Association News, Overview and Talking Points

Family Believed to be Sickened by Pesticide at Virgin Islands Resort

News Coverage

A Delaware family is back home and in the hospital after getting sick while on vacation, due to possible exposure to methyl bromide.

April 13, 2015

PHILADELPHIA – A Delaware family is back home and in the hospital after getting sick while on vacation, due to a possible exposure to methyl bromide.

The Environmental Protection Agency suspects Steve Esmond, his wife Dr. Theresa Devine, and their two teenage boys were poisoned by methyl bromide. They were airlifted to the United States mainland for continued treatment. The mother has been released and the father and two teenage sons remain in critical condition.

Use of methyl bromide was confirmed the day after the family became ill, which has helped inform doctors and medical experts on how to treat the family, Judith Enck, the EPA's regional administrator in New York City, which has jurisdiction over the U.S. Virgin Islands, told ABC News.

EPA banned methyl bromide for residential use in 1984 primarily for health concerns. That ban extends to U.S. territories, including the Virgin Islands, Enck told ABC News. So far the investigation has revealed a certified applicator working for Terminix applied the methyl bromide in the complex while targeting an indoor beetle that consumes wood, Enck said. The company is now under a criminal investigation led by the U.S. Justice Department.

A Terminix spokesperson emailed PCT the following statement: "First and foremost, the family is in our thoughts and prayers. We're cooperating with authorities in their investigation, and we're conducting our own thorough internal investigation. We're committed to performing all work we undertake in a way that is safe for our employees, customers and the public."

The National Pest Management Association noted that the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the United States Department of Justice, and U.S.V.I Department of Planning and Natural Resources are investigating. NPMA also released a statement and talking points ([click here to read](#)).

National Pest Management Association

Public Policy

Methyl Bromide Incident: Overview and Talking Points Prepared for the National Pest Management Association by the Professional Pest Management Alliance

April 7, 2015

Background

According to published reports, in March 2015 a Delaware family was admitted to the hospital after becoming ill while on vacation at a rental property in the U.S. Virgin Islands (U.S.V.I). They were airlifted to the United States mainland for continued treatment. The mother has been released and the father and two teenage sons remain in critical condition.

The family may have been exposed to methyl bromide that was allegedly used to fumigate a residential unit below the one in which they were staying. The property manager has indicated that they had recently contracted the services of a pest management company to treat for bugs in that unit. The United States Environmental Protection Agency, the United States Department of Justice, and U.S.V.I Department of Planning and Natural Resources are investigating.

NPMA Statement

The National Pest Management Association was deeply saddened and concerned to learn about this unfortunate incident and continues to hope for a full recovery for the entire family. Methyl bromide is a broad spectrum pesticide used in the control of insects, nematodes, weeds, pathogens and rodents. In the U.S., the professional pest management industry uses methyl bromide principally for import and export fumigation treatments and certain commodity uses; the pesticide is no longer labeled for use in residential structures.

Within the professional pest management industry, products used to prevent and address pest infestations - which can negatively affect public health and property - are an important and essential tool. All pest products used by the industry are reviewed and registered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and our member companies are committed to following the standards set forth by the EPA.

Talking Points

- All products used for the treatment of structural pest infestations - for which NPMA members are responsible - are studied, reviewed and registered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to be used by trained and regulated pest management applicators.

- NPMA works closely with the EPA to ensure that all products used in pest management practices are consistently evaluated, reviewed, and provided with accurate and comprehensive labeling for use.

- In the U.S., methyl bromide is used in agriculture, primarily for soil fumigation, as well as for commodity and quarantine treatment. Treatment with methyl bromide gas involves the fumigation, for example, of warehouses and food processing facilities and ships (as well as

other transportation vehicles) for insects and rodents.

- It is important to remember that leaving pests unmanaged can lead to real health and structural issues.

- NPMA encourages consumers to consult with a qualified and licensed pest professional to discuss any concerns about pest management and address the proactive and preventative measures that they can take to avoid pest infestations.

- More importantly, by working with a pest professional, consumers can ensure that a pest problem is properly identified and effectively treated.

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